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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 003564

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: Somalia-After the Reconciliation Congress

REF: A) Nairobi 3463 B) Nairobi 3546

Classified by PolOff Hodan Hassan for reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: As anticipated the NRC closed on August 30. Chairman Ali Mahdi recognizes the reconciliation process will be ongoing, and he expects to continue playing a pivotal role. (See Septel text of NRC Communique) President Yusuf has committed the TFG to moving forward with the transitional tasks ahead, including holding elections in 2009. Through public diplomacy and stepped up political engagement, the U.S. must move quickly to support specific steps to implement the roadmap to 2009 and to bring constructive Somali voices into the dialogue on the transitional tasks ahead. End Summary.

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Closing Ceremony  
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¶2. (U) The Somali National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) officially closed on August 30 after six weeks of deliberations. At the closing ceremony National Reconciliation and Governance Committee (NGRC) Chair Ali Mahdi read the final resolutions out loud and the delegates approved (by a show of hands) the NRC's conclusions. In a handing over ceremony, Mahdi presented the resolutions to Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Abdullahi Yusuf. The International Advisory Committee (IAC) was represented at the closing ceremony of the Congress by UNPOS, UNDP, Norway, Belgium, EC, Italy, Egypt, Yemen, AU and Kenya as the chair of IGAD. The Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Zhang Ming was also in attendance and he reportedly pledged to provide \$1 million to the TFG, \$300,000 to AMISOM, and \$400,000 for humanitarian assistance.

¶3. (U) According to delegates at the closing, President Abdullahi Yusuf, Prime Minister Ali Gedi, and Speaker of Parliament Adan Madobe all stated they are ready to implement the recommendations of the Congress and that the peace process will continue. Yusuf committed the TFG to proceeding with the development of a draft constitution which will be subjected to a referendum, carrying out a census, and introducing multiparty politics. He also reiterated his promise to hand over power at the end of his term in 2009.

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Mahdi's Next Steps  
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¶4. (C) In conversations with us and in teleconferences with the IAC, Mahdi spelled out his plans for post-NRC follow up. Mahdi told us he will seek a new mandate for the NGRC - to continue to pursue dialogue and reconciliation, and to follow up on implementation of the recommendations of the NRC. He expects Yusuf to issue a presidential decree extending the mandate of the NGRC within the next few days.

Mahdi acknowledged that significant opposition voices remain outside the NRC process, and that reconciliation and dialogue will need to continue. He reiterated the need for the international community to assist in getting those opposed to the TFG, whether within or outside the country, into the reconciliation and transition process.

15. (C) Mahdi insists the communique is a legally-binding document and the parliament will be required to enact legislation necessary to implement the resolutions.

In his speech at the NRC closing, the Prime Minister reportedly indicated the Ministry of National Reconciliation will begin to take up the task of moving the reconciliation process forward and assisting with implementation of the NRC's resolutions. Mahdi stated that Yusuf views the NGRC as primarily responsible for implementation and the reconciliation process overall, which he said is not the position of PM Gedi.

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Comment and Next Steps  
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16. (C) As anticipated after lengthy discussions with Mahdi and the TFG, the final NRC communique contained specific action items related to good governance and execution of transitional tasks. As reported in Refs A and B, we believe the outcomes can provide a basis for moving the reconciliation and governance process forward. Immediate steps will focus on public diplomacy to welcome the NRC's final resolutions as important steps in advancing the process of national reconciliation and in moving toward a successful transition in 2009.

17. (C) We strongly recommend -- and most of the IAC members agree -- the focus now should be on providing support to the key transitional tasks, such as drafting a constitution, developing electoral laws, and addressing security sector issues. On the diplomatic front, we

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will press the TFG and the opposition to engage in dialogue to achieve implementation of the NRC recommendations. The desire to speed up the implementation of the transitional tasks should not result in the speedy constitution of various committees simply to be filled by TFG supporters.

18. (C) Presenting key opposition figures with an opportunity to play a role in developing implementation modalities for the NRC's recommendations and participating in transitional committees can prove helpful in bringing them into the political process. There are indications that small and very low-key meetings are already taking place in Djibouti between the TFG (reportedly represented by Prime Minister Gedi and possibly Mogadishu mayor Mohamed Dheere) and various opposition figures. The U.S. must remain a key catalyst to facilitate dialogue and meetings between key opposition figures and the NGRC and the TFG on the way forward. Regional travel by Special Envoy Yates will be crucial to this effort.

RANNEBERGER